

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAPE T 00083 231740Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 231543Z JAN 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6620
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RYEKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0083

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJ: PROXIMITY TALKS AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 79, (B) USUN 0187, (C) STATE 017257

1. BRAND FOURIE CALLED THE CAPE FIVE TO HIS OFFICE THIS AFTERNOON
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00083 231740Z

TO GIVE US ORALLY THE SAG RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL MADE YESTERDAY
ON THE PROXIMITY TALKS. THERE WAS NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE
TO FOURIE DOING THIS RATHER THAN BOTHA, BECAUSE THE LATTER WAS
TIED UP IN MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. THE REPLY FOURIE GAVE US IS SUMMARIEZED IN THE FOLLOWING
JOINT REPORT ON OUR MEETINGS:

BEGIN QUOTE

(1) THE CAPE TOWN FIVE WERE REQUESTED TO COME TO BRAND FOURIE'S OFFICE AT 3 P.M. THIS AFTERNOON TO RECEIVE THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPLY TO THE COMMUNICATION WHICH WE PRESENTED YESTERDAY EVENING.

(2) BRAND FOURIE INDICATED THAT THE COMMUNICATION HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER LAST NIGHT AND WITH THE CABINET THIS MORNING. HE HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED TO TELL US THAT PIK BOTHA AND HE WOULD BE ATTENDING THE PROXIMITY TALKS ON THE RESPECTIVE DATES INDICATED IN OUR PROPOSAL EVEN THOUGH THESE PRESENTED SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES FOR THEM.

(3) WITH RESPECT TO THE POINT ON AN ANNOUNCEMENT FOR A DATE FOR ELECTIONS, FOURIE SAID THAT THE STATE PRESIDENT IN THE SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT ON FRIDAY JAN 27 WOULD MAKE ONLY A GENERAL REFERENCE TO ELECTIONS WITHOUT SPECIFYING DATES. THE PRIME MINISTER IN WINDING UP THE NO-CONFIDENCE DEBATE (PROBABLY ON FEB 3) WOULD ALSO AVOID MENTIONING SPECIFIC DATES. HE WOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE COMMITMENT TO GRANT NAMIBIA INDEPENDENCE BY THE END OF THE YEAR AND THE NEED FOR ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. WHILE THE PRECISE LANGUAGE STILL REMAINS TO BE SETTLED, THE PRIME MINISTER'S REFERENCE WOULD BE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CAPE T 00083 231740Z

" THE FIXING AND ANNOUNCING OF THE DATE FOR ELECTIONS WOULD BE LEFT TO THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL BUT IN DOING SO HE WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS".

(4) BRAND FOURIE SAID OFF THE RECORD THAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE DATE FOR ELECTIONS WOULD NOT BE ANNOUNCED BEFORE OR DURING THE NEW YORK DISCUSSIONS BUT WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE SOON AFTER PIK BOTHA RETURNED TO CAPE TOWN. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR FURTHER POSTPONEMENT. ALL OF THIS OF COURSE WOULD BE CONDITIONAL ON THE OUTCOME OF THE NEW YORK TALKS.

(5) IN VIEW OF THE POTENTIALLY ADVERSE IMPACT WHICH SO SPECIFIC A REFERENCE TO THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL FIXING AND ANNOUNCING THE DATE FOR ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE ON THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS, WE ASKED FOURIE WHETHER A MORE GENERAL FORMULATION MIGHT NOT BE MADE. FOURIE REPLIED THAT HIS IS LANGUAGE APPROVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET AND HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF RECONSIDERATION. THIS WOULD SEEM TO IMPLY THAT PROVIDED THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE IS APPOINTED IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL'S ANNOUNCE-

MENT COULD BE MADE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, BUT IF THERE WERE A DELAY IN APPOINTING HIM THEN THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL WOULD HAVE TO GO AHEAD ON HIS OWN.

(6) FOURIE SAID HE HOPED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW YORK MEETING COULD BE MADE VERY SOON. HE ALSO ASKED FOR A COPY OF THE FIVE POWER PROPOSALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE SAID WE WOULD RELAY THESE POINTS TO OUR CAPITALS AND REQUEST A SPEEDY RESPONSE. END QUOTE.

3. THE PROBLEM I SEE WITH THE SAG RESPONSE IS THE EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL FIXING AND ANNOUNCING THE DATE FOR ELECTIONS IN VORSTER'S PARLIAMENTARY SPEECH. THE UNILATERAL CHARACTER OF PM'S PROPOSED LANGUAGE, COMING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CAPE T 00083 231740Z

PRESUMABLY AFTER SWAPO HAS AGREED TO THE NEW YORK TALKS AND AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE BUT BEFORE THE TALKS OPEN, COULD LEAD SWAPO TO QUESTION THE UTILITY OF GOING TO THE TALKS. IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE PROPOSED SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE DOES NOT CLOSE THE DOOR TO THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL FIXING AND ANNOUNCING THE DATE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, BUT SWAPO MAY NOT LOOK ON IT FROM THAT GENEROUS A PERSPECTIVE. BECAUSE OF THIS CONCERN I SOUGHT THE CLARIFICATION FROM FOURIE WHICH IS CONTAINED IN THE FIRST SENTENCE OF PARA (5) OF THE JOINT REPORT. MY COLLEAGUES WERE NOT CONCERNED BY THIS ASPECT. THE DEPT AND USUN WILL HAVE A BETTER FEEL FOR HOW SWAPO IS LIKELY TO RESPOND. HOPEFULLY SWAPO CAN BE PERSUADED NOT TO OVERREACT. FOURIE WAS VERY FIRM IN SAYING THAT THE SAG WOULD NOT RPT NOT CONSIDER CHANGES IN THE FORMULATION.

4. THE THIRD SENTENCE OF PARA (5) OF THE JOINT REPORT WAS INCLUDED AT THE INSISTENCE OF SIR DAVID SCOTT WITH THE ACQUIESCENCE OF THE OTHER THREE COLLEAGUES. BOWDLER

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